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Method and apparatus for providing demographically targeted television commercials.

Different commercial messages are broadcast to different demographically targeted audiences in a cable television system or the like. A first television channel contains television programs and periodic commercial messages. A second television channel contains alternate commercial messages. Demographic characteristics of a viewer are identified, and commercial messages are selectively provided from the first or second channel, depending upon the viewer's demographic characteristics. Demographic

data can be input by a viewer via a remote control, downloaded to a subscriber's converter from a remote headend, or programmed into the converter at installation. Prioritization of the demographic characteristics of a plurality of television viewers watching a program together enables commercials to be targeted to the viewer having highest priority. Statistical data can be maintained concerning the number and identity of subscribers viewing specific commercials.

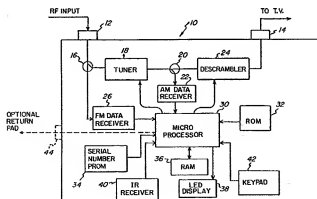


FIG. 1

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 90 11 7047

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
Y	WO-A-8 707 807 (INFORMATION RESOURCES INC.)	1, 13, 18, 20, 25, 26, 29	H04N7/16
A	* page 1, line 1 - page 3, line 19 *	2-12, 14-17, 19, 21-24, 27, 28, 30, 31	
Y	US-A-4 630 108 (GOMERSALL)	1, 13, 18, 20, 25, 26, 29	
A	* column 1, line 1 - column 2, line 49 *	2-12, 14-17, 19, 21-24, 27, 28, 30, 31	
A	US-A-4 725 886 (GALUMBECK ET AL.) * column 1, line 11 - column 2, line 46 *	1-31	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
A	WO-A-8 801 465 (SCIENTIFIC ATLANTA INC.) * abstract *	1-31	H04N
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 18 NOVEMBER 1991	Examiner GREVE M. P.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application I : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			